

The Great Comparisons of Love

INTRODUCTION:

Bird Story

- In life the people we should love the most can be the very people we struggle doing so
- At times the people we need love from fail to do so

CONTEXT:

I always thank my God for you because of the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in him in every way, in all speech and all knowledge. In this way, the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. -- 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 (CSB)

- Corinth was a church that was manifesting all the spiritual gifts
- Corinth was a church that was also struggling with spiritual pride
- Corinth was a church struggling with immoral behavior, divisions, doctrine, and submission to authority.
- Apostle Paul has been laying out the case for the supremacy of love in everything the Christian does.
- Describes what it is like to do ministry yet not have love
- Describes in detail what agape love look like
- Paul will now make some theological statements about love in comparison to:
 1. Time
 2. Spiritual gifts
 3. Future
 4. Faith and hope

1. Time

- The Bible covers history over the last 6000 years

I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. -- Genesis 3:15 (CSB)

- OT the struggle of Satan trying to stop the woman's offspring that would come through the nation of Israel
- Cycles of obedience and blessing and disobedience and consequences
- 400 years of silence

Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. -- Luke 2:4-7 (CSB)

- Jesus lives a quiet working-class life for 30 years
- Jesus conducts a 3-year public ministry culminating with the cross, resurrection, and ascension.
- Holy Spirit given at Pentecost the church age starts
- Rapture 7 years of Great Tribulation
- Return and Millennial Kingdom
- Last rebellion, Great White Throne Judgment, new heaven, and earth.
- From eternity past to eternity forward love will never end.... Why?

*Dear friends, let us love one another, because **love is from God**, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. -- 1 John 4:7-10 (CSB)*

- Original language love will never lose a battle.
- **The cross is the ultimate demonstration of love where our greatest enemy was defeated (death).**
- We only have so much time this side of heaven, what will we do with it?

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring — what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. -- James 4:14 (CSB)

2. Spiritual Gifts

- Spiritual Gifts are given to the church for its growth and edification
- Spiritual Gifts are to be pursued
- A time is coming when Spiritual Gifts will not be needed and will cease.
- **“when the perfect comes”** – Cessationists Bible not return of Jesus
- **A different view on the continuation or ceasing of Spiritual Gifts does not make one church better or less than. Believing so is not helpful to the Kingdom of God.**
- Manifestation and use of Spiritual Gifts are imperfect because we are imperfect, but we await the return of the “Perfect”.

For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be abolished is death. For God has put everything under his feet. -- 1 Corinthians 15:25-27 (CSB)

3. Future

- We live away from home
- We can grow in Christian behavior and knowledge of God, but it will not be perfects in this life.

*For we know that if our earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not made with hands. Indeed, we groan in this tent, desiring to put on our heavenly dwelling, since, when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. Indeed, we groan while we are in this tent, burdened as we are, because we do not want to be unclothed but clothed, so that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment. -- **2 Corinthians 5:1-5 (CSB)***

- Our future was procured with love
- Our future is guaranteed by love
- Our perfection will result in a fullness of love

4. Faith and Hope

Now **faith** is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. For by this our ancestors were approved. -- **Hebrews 11:1-2 (CSB)**

“Ordinarily, when we express hope, we are expressing uncertainty. But this is *not* the distinctive biblical meaning of hope. And the main thing I want to do is show you from Scripture that biblical hope is not just a desire for something good in the future, but rather, biblical hope is **a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future.**”

Biblical hope not only desires something good for the future — it expects it to happen. And it not only expects it to happen — it is confident that it will happen. There is a moral certainty that the good we expect and desire will be done.” **John Piper Article “What is Hope?”**

*But Thomas (called “Twin”), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were telling him, “We’ve seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe.” A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don’t be faithless, but believe.” Thomas responded to him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.**” -- **John 20:24-29 (CSB)***

- Love is greater than Faith and Hope because one day our Faith and Hope will be realized in Christ.

APPLICATION:

What prevents us from receiving and giving love?

1. Requires the Holy Spirit – To love like God loves we need God

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. -- **Romans 5:1-5 (CSB)***

2. Sin

*Indeed, the Lord's arm is not too weak to save, and his ear is not too deaf to hear. But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen. -- **Isaiah 59:1-2 (CSB)***

*Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, and don't give the devil an opportunity. Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ. -- **Ephesians 4:26-32 (CSB)***

3. Pain

*The Spirit of the Lord God is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, -- **Isaiah 61:1 (CSB)***

The Emotional Pain Ladder

The list below shows the progressive damage to the heart of unhealed hurt.

1. Hurt
2. Pain
3. Frustration
4. Anger
5. Depression
6. Anxiety
7. Stop talking
8. Pull away from relationships
9. Lose your sense of personal identity
10. Impulsive decisions
11. Despair
12. Suicidal thoughts